

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

together with Stefano, emigrated to Florence, and were admitted to the Florentine citizenship. Their family had business connections with Florence, and, apparently, had kept a workshop there for some considerable time previously.¹ In their adopted city they continued to exercise the art of dyers and tanners, but with little success, and were soon reduced to poverty. Catherine's beloved friend and companion, Lisa, naturally accompanied her husband.

Catherine followed them not only with prayers, but with letters. Writing to the three together, " I would see you always united," she says, " with the sweet bond of holy charity, so that neither demon nor word of man can separate you from it. I remember the word that Jesus Christ said : *he that humbleth himself shall be exalted*. Do thou, Benincasa, who art the eldest, wish to be the least of all, and thou, Bartolommeo, wish to be less than the least, and I pray thee, Stefano, to be subject to God and them ; and so, sweetly, will you preserve yourselves in most perfect charity." ² Patience and submission to the will of God is the note of her three letters to Benincasa. The blood of Christ will make him strong to bear with true patience every labour and tribulation, from whatever side they come : " It will make you persevering, so that, even until death, you will endure with true humility ; because in that blood the eye of your understanding will be illumined by the truth, which is that God wills nought else save our sanctification, because He loves us ineffably; otherwise, He would not have paid so great a price for us. Be then content, be content in every time and place, for all are given you by the Eternal Love for love. Rejoice in your tribulations, and consider yourself unworthy that God should send you by the way that

¹ Grottanelli, *op. cit.*, pp. 211-213, gives the text of the petition of the three brothers (October 16, 1370) for admission to the Florentine citizenship, which was approved by 78 votes to 28. It is difficult to explain their claim to have been virtually Florentine citizens for so many years, unless it is a mere form of words and a recognized polite fiction. In Florence, the *járš tinturc guadi* was one of the minor guilds subjected to the great *Arts della Lana*, the guild of the wool-merchants.

² Letter 14 (252).